

**BLM 2009 - State Support for Public Access****FY2009 Request:****\$300,000****Reference No:****41426****AP/AL:** Appropriation**Category:** Natural Resources**Location:** Statewide**House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2008 - 10/01/2009**Project Type:** Transitional**Contact:** Leta Simons**Contact Phone:** (907)465-2400**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

The BLM 2009 project's goal is to receive the majority of the state's remaining land entitlement established under the Alaska Statehood Act. One of the primary responsibilities of DNR is to receive clear title to state lands. The project receives a majority of its funding through an agreement with the BLM in order to meet the timeline established by the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act. This CIP replaces funding that the BLM has eliminated for those portions of the program that focus on reserving access to public lands conveyed from the federal government to private entities and protecting state interest in lands reconveyed to the federal government to fulfill valid 1906 Native Allotments.

<b>Funding:</b>	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	Total
Gen Fund	\$300,000	\$300,000					\$600,000
Total:	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$600,000

☐ State Match Required   
 ☐ One-Time Project   
 ☐ Phased - new   
 ☒ Phased - underway   
 ☐ On-Going  
 0% = Minimum State Match % Required   
 ☐ Amendment   
 ☐ Mental Health Bill

**Operating & Maintenance Costs:**

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

**Additional Information / Prior Funding History:**

SLA07/CH30    \$ 300.0    Ongoing

SLA06/CH82    \$ 200.0    Ongoing

**Project Description/Justification:**

The BLM 2009 Conveyance Project is a federal effort with the initial goal of completing federal land transfers in Alaska by 2009. The project was initiated by the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in FY05 with the objective of accelerating the remaining land transfers, in order of priority, to individual Alaska Native Allottees, Alaska Native Corporations and the State of Alaska. However, anticipated federal funding for the project has not been to the level anticipated at the beginning of the project.

This request for general funds to augment federal funding is necessary because continued federal budget reductions will result in the state receiving insufficient funding for this project. The overall US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) program is not being significantly reduced except for land surveys, therefore the reductions in federal funding will not significantly reduce the project workload for the state. In fact, some of BLM's streamlining efforts have resulted in more work for the state as BLM's efforts focus more on quantity than quality of decisions and conveyances. As a result, the state must put more emphasis on ensuring that public access is protected when lands are transferred to private ownership, that BLM decisions on Native Allotments and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) conveyances recognize state ownership interests, and ensure that the state receives clear title to the land it receives.

In addition, the BLM has specifically stated that due to its reduced budget allocated to the state, the reduction in federal funds must be in the area of the state's work to protect public access and navigable waters, two critical components for the state. Federal budget reductions have reduced the BLM contribution to the state by at least 28%, or about \$300,000/year.

The BLM 2009 Conveyance Project will result in the state receiving approximately 10 –12 million acres still owed to the state under the Statehood Act. The project will also result in the transfer of over eight million acres of federal land to Alaska Native Corporations formed under ANCSA. This project is necessary so that the state can continue to respond to and participate in this project. The state will need to review and respond to a significantly increased number of BLM conveyance decisions, decisions on easements and navigable waters, and requests for reconveyance of state land found to have been conveyed to the state in error. The state will also receive significantly more decisions to transfer land to the state under the remaining statehood entitlements and will need to process many additional title documents.

#### Why is this Project Needed Now?:

This project provides the tools and the staff so that the state can participate in BLM's accelerated land transfer process. In FY 01-05, DNR has received an average of 50,000 acres per year from the federal government. In FY 06, BLM transferred over 1.5 million acres, and in FY 07 over two million acres to the state. The federal government has clearly accelerated the land transfer process and the state must be an active participant in this process. Without this state funding, public access across ANCSA lands will not be protected and state owned navigable waters will be improperly included in conveyance documents. The BLM program, originally to be completed by the end of federal fiscal year 2009, will need to continue for several more years in order to accomplish its objectives.

#### Specific Spending Detail:

<u>LINE ITEM</u>	<u>DOLLAR AMOUNT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION (text)</u>
Personal Services	\$ 160,000	Most of this funding will be used to for the ANCSA Conveyance Review team. This team will review ANCSA conveyances to ensure state interests have been adequately protected (i.e., access to navigable water bodies) as well as public interests (i.e., reservation of 17(b) easements, RS 2477 historic trails). Staff (several are partially funded by CIP, part federal funds, and part existing GF): Access Review Coordinator – 1 Natural Resource Manager I (partially funded by this CIP), ANCSA Reviews (including 17(b) easement review) – 1 Natural Resource Specialist III, 2 Natural Resource Specialist II, 1 Natural Resource Specialist I.
Services	\$ 140,000	Includes approximately \$126.0 to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game via a Reimbursable Services Agreement to continue funding two existing positions established in FY04.

#### Project Support:

Federal Government, including Senators Stevens and Murkowski and Representative Young, US Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Native Corporations, individual Alaska Native allottees, mining industry, other advocates of land and resource development, municipalities (primarily boroughs), individual Alaskans.

**Project Opposition:** None known or anticipated.